|  |
| --- |
| **LMP Strategy Group Action Notes**  **Thursday 13th July 2023**  **Time: 10.00-12.00**  **Venue:** RETAS, 233-237 Roundhay Road, Harehills, LS8 4HS |
|  |

Karen welcomed partners to the strategy group meeting and reviewed previous actions.

(A number of articles based on previous strategy group meeting themes have been published on the Leeds Migration Partnership (LMP) blog).

|  |
| --- |
| Summary of actions from the last meeting 20th April 2023: |
| Modern Day Slavery – Themed Item:   * Action: Partners asked how to support victims of modern slavery, in line with the national referral mechanism, and asked what training and resources are available to raise awareness.   + Action in progress: Chapeltown Citizen Advice Bureau are putting on training/refresher sessions on Modern Day Slavery. Partners re invited to contact Nick Morgan if they would like to include staff members. * Action outstanding: A number of questions were asked by LMP to seek clarification on the Missing Persons Policy. Jordon is attending an event on the 25th May and will update LMP further. LMP suggested a session at LMP Operations meeting to increase awareness and understanding including:   + What are the improvements?   + How will it be measured?   + How will it support the people concerned?   + Jordon will look to explore this with the Immigration Absconders Team and update LMP.   Action: Jordon unable to attend LMP on 13th July to provide a further update. Sam to follow up with Jordan Alexander from Palm Cove to attend the next LMP Meeting to give update of the event that took place on 25th May as LMP would like to gain clarification on the Missing Persons Policy. |
| LMP Priorities – Health:   * The Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being refreshed, the Leeds Migrant Health Board (LMHB) received a presentation and were consulted for feedback in relation to migrant communities. * Action: As LMP reps were unable to attend Sam contacted Cath Ward who facilitates the LMHB asking her to connect with Jon Beech and Karen Pearse to ensure LMP Health leads are given the opportunity to feed into the Leeds Wellbeing Strategy refresh.   + Action complete: Sam contacted Cath Ward who facilitates the LMHB asking her to connect with Karen and Jon to enable this connection with LMP. |
| National, Regional and Local Updates - LMP Operations Group  Refugee Community Organisation leaders have raised concerns for young people. There are activities on offer such as football, however, it was raised specialist involvement is required to support the complex issues facing young people.   * Action: Sam Powell to connect Ali Mahgoub with Beverly Yearwood, Safer, Stronger Communities, to consider how to address raised concerns.   + Action complete: Sam followed up with Bev Yearwood and Ali Mahgoub. Bev Yearwood is going to have a meeting with Ali Mahgoub in due course. |

Key Theme: British Red Cross International Family Tracing Service

Becky Lehane from [British Red Cross International Family Tracing Service](about:blank), shared an update on the service provision.

* International Family Tracing work with the Red Cross movement around the world, however there may be some countries where they are not able to operate. The Red Cross trace missing family members if contact is lost due to conflict, natural disaster or migration. Service users are asked to contact British Red Cross as a last resort having made their own attempts to make contact.
* The service also completes a number of local searches within the UK, as incoming traces come from people who are looking for family members that they consider may be in the UK.
* International searches for family members involves going out to peoples last known address and using community/local contacts so the Red Cross seek to obtain this information about the sought persons whereabouts.
* Timeline: Instant matches through data can be made. However, It can take a long time before the Red Cross have something to report following a search request, in some cases it could take several years before they are able to obtain answers on cases. As a result the Red Cross are unable to provide timelines.
* There are 4 strands to their work across the service: Tracing, Red Cross Message, Attestation of Detention and Health and Welfare.
  + Attestation of Detention is when a certificate is provided to state that service user has been visited by the International Committee of Red Cross in detention and if they’ve been registered by them.
  + They also do Health and Welfare Reports when there might be a sudden loss of contact with vulnerable people.
  + There are two ways to track/trace people which are: Actively Looking whereby the Red Cross require the last known address as a starting point; and Passively Looking if the service users does not know where their relatives are. They can choose to register their details on the Red Cross internal systems / public website whereby people can be found through that resource.
* The Red Cross reopened to new referrals on the 1st June following 18 months of closure. Yorkshire and North East Team have 3.4 FTE Servce Co-ordinators, 0.6 FTE Support Assistants, volunteers and are currently recruiting new volunteers.
* The current challenges for Red Cross:
  + A high number of referrals / increased demand for the service;
  + Instrumentalisation of the service for legal purposes which puts pressure on service users, staff and volunteers, whereby the Home Office ask for evidence for people seeking asylum to support their claims to prove they are tracing family members. The service’s only aim is to look for family members and it is not within their guiding principles to be involved in any judiciary processes. This pressure from the Home Office can mean that people are forced to open cases when they do not want to and that staff and volunteers are put into dangerous situations abroad to look for people when there is no genuine desire or need to open a tracing case. It also creates a high demand for the service and associated pressures on capacity to deliver the service.

Discussion and Q&A

* When do you say to family members they can’t find someone?
  + The Red Cross go out to certain areas at certain times depending on the country, for example Afghanistan is very large so they may go to certain areas once a quarter or once every six months, or if they cant physically track/trace for people they will try to look through databases. The will tell family members that they can’t find someone if they have exhausted all avenues available to them to search for family members.
* Can you repoen a case?
  + Only If there is new information regarding the person involved and not existing.
  + Also the British Red Cross have to delete data in line with their data retention policy. This can mean that some records are deleted after 12 months.
* Are other local groups working for missing people?
  + Becky stated it depends on the country. They might use local groups. In certain countries like Sudan service users might not want to share information with the government.
  + The staff at the Red Cross explain to people the risks. In some places people do notproceed due to the concern of information sharing with the government/ authorities.
* How do people get referred in?
  + There is a referral form that’s sent to a central inbox and also updates on websites regarding conflicts.
  + To make a referral you can email [findyourfamilynortheast@redcross.org.uk](about:blank) or contact 0114 2427378. Once emailed you get an acknowledgment email with a reference number.
  + Website: [Find missing family | Family Tracing | British Red Cross](https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/find-missing-family?c_code=175151&c_source=google&c_name=Refugee&adg=red%20cross%20international%20family%20tracing&c_creative=brand&c_medium=cpc&gclid=Cj0KCQjwmICoBhDxARIsABXkXlLZZTk4rbDAI2cma7y6QDNontDpPYGL0gwdZofrDNj1At4O5jQogGQaAu8FEALw_wcB)

Updates on [Priorities](about:blank)

Cost of Living

* Nick from Morgan [Chapeltown Citizen’s Advice](about:blank) Bureau updated in regards to the Cost Of Living agenda where there is a big shift towards the deficit budgets whereby when expenditure exceeds income. This is mainly due to mortgages going up and the concentration will be on supporting people with mortgages. Citizen Advice Bureau make sure they keep in the know with what’s going on in the news so they can support communities.
* An update on Cost of Living was provided to the Leeds Strategic Migration Board and there was a couple of asks to keep Cost Of Living on the agenda.

Legal Aid

* Rebecca from [Manuel Bravo](about:blank) updated they have been working with South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice.
* Following research there is no legal aid available in West Yorkshire currently. .
* Manuel Bravo are not currently dealing with Asylum Questionnaires.
* Lawyers have very high caseloads.
* Manuel Bravo are running workshops to support people who can’t get legal advice and giving training sessions about managing trauma. Potentially they are thinking about ways which people can be legally trained and hoping to go back into Wakefield and Bradford if they can get more lawyers involved. Also trying to expand their outreach programme.
* Mohammed commented that Refugee Action have translated the Asylum Questionnaire FAQs in different languages following the Home Office adding two more nationalities to the Streamlined Asylum Programme..

|  |
| --- |
| Actions: Mary Brandon to be invited to attend the next LMP meeting to provide an update from Asylum Matters - Karen |

National, Regional and Local Updates

**LMP Operations Group update**

* There was an LMP Operations Group on the 5th June with a very useful [presentation](about:blank) on LCC Private Rented Service and Leeds Housing Options. There was a lot of information provided about how the [Private Rented service](about:blank) can support tenants with issues and problems in their private rented accommodations and [Leeds Housing Options](about:blank) provided information regarding support for homelessness and finding accommodation. RCOs can also receive a similar presentation if helpful, Ali can contact Sam to follow up.
* The Private Rented Service also work to support people seeking asylum living in asylum dispersal accommodation. People seeking asylum and support services should approach Migrant Help in the first instance, to raise concerns regarding asylum accommodation, however, the Private Rented Service can also be approached and they will investigate to escalate and address unresolved issue/s.
* Private Rented Team enforce [Selective Licencing](about:blank) which operates in the Harehills and Beeston areas. All Private Rented landlords are required to apply for a Selective Licence to operate in these areas. The Private Rented Service inspect all properties in Selective Licence areas to ensure they meet standards, this mean the council are cross the threshold of homes and are using this opportunity to engage with residents to link them with wider support needs such as health and employment. Selective Licencing is in place until 2025.

Leeds Strategic Migration Board (LSMB) and LCC Migration Team Update

* The Home Office have confirmed the Afghan hotels are closing toward the end of August 2023 and residents have been served eviction notices by the Home Office.
* Staff across Leeds City Council are trying to find properties for the residents, this includes Leeds and other parts of the country. If properties are not found by the eviction date, it is expected residents will have to be placed into temporary accommodation.
* As you are likely aware, the Home Office have announced room sharing for people seeking asylum living in suppoted accommodation. We have been notified that there will be an of increase in the number of asylum seekers in Leeds contingency accommodation. We have raised our concerns as a Local Authority around the room sharing agenda in line with previous discussions and concerns raised by partners. As we understand Mears are completing risk assessments for implementation, but we have not been given any timescales as to when this will be implemented.
* Karen asked if this is also going to take place in dispersal accomodation?
  + *Response:* We have been informed at present contingency hotels is the focus.
* Leeds City Council Migration team Head of Service recently reached out to LMP partners to ask what are the key issues and concerns are around the asylum agenda in Leeds. Leeds City Council has received funding from the Home Office in regard to procurement of accommodation in our area. We will be releasing funding for the third sector to support people seeking asylum in the city and address pressures in the asylum support offer. We will be putting together the specification and sharing with partners after the summer break.

|  |
| --- |
| **Actions:**   * LMP partners suggested a focused meeting as partners on the forthcoming asylum funding to consider how the sector can best develop a coorindated respond to meet need. * Housing has been suggested to be the next theme for the next LMP Strategic Group Meeting. |

Any Other Business

The next meeting theme is to be confirmed.

Future meeting dates for 2023:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Meeting** | **Date** | **Venue** |
| **LMP Strategic Group** | * Thursday 5th October 2023 (10am-12pm) * Thursday 11th January 2024 (10am-12pm) | tbc |
| **LMP Operational Group** | * Monday 4th September 2023 (10am-12pm) * Monday 11th December 2023 (10am-12pm) | Leeds Refugee Forum One Community Centre, LS9 7SG |
| **Leeds Strategic Migration Board (LSMB)** | * Tuesday 10th October 2023 2pm-4pm | Microsoft Teams |